



March 28, 2019

Honorable Corey Johnson
Speaker of the New York City Council
250 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson,

The Progressive Caucus is dedicated to creating a more just and equal New York City. At a time when the federal administration threatens the rights and access to public services of our residents, and income instability and unaffordability in our city continues to persist, an equitable budget that strengthens core City services and protects the most vulnerable New Yorkers is all the more important. With that in mind, the Caucus has identified our FY20 priorities.

The Council's Progressive Caucus advocates for the following under '**Big Ideas**' **Mayoral List**:

1. Re-entry Centers
2. Universal Right to Counsel for Immigrants (Facing Deportation/Detention)
3. Universal Childcare
4. Bus Turnaround (Expanded Bus Lanes with Enforcement, Signal Priority, All-Door Boarding)
5. Human Services Contracts / Salary Parity

The Council's Progressive Caucus advocates for the following under **Council Initiatives**:

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| 1. Expand Food Access | 6. Combating Opioids |
| 2. Alternatives to Incarceration | 7. Cultural After School Adventure |
| 3. Crisis Management System | 8. Community Land Trusts |
| 4. Stabilizing NYC | 9. Ending Girl/Women's Incarceration |
| 5. City's First Readers | 10. Language Interpreter Bank |

The next pages detail the specifics of these budget proposals. Thank you for your dedication to advancing opportunities for all New Yorkers.

The Progressive Caucus of the New York City Council

Council Member **Diana Ayala, Co-Chair** (District 8, Bronx & Manhattan)

Council Member **Ben Kallos, Co-Chair** (District 5, Manhattan)

Council Member **Keith Powers, Vice-Chair, Budget Advocacy** (District 4, Manhattan)

Council Member **Carlos Menchaca, Vice-Chair, Civic Engagement** (District 38, Brooklyn)

FY20 Progressive Caucus Budget Priorities

'Big Idea' (Mayoral) Budget Submissions

1. Reentry Centers: \$2 million*

Reentry Centers would provide social services and community-based referrals to individuals recently released from incarceration and their families. Returning home and reintegrating back into the community can be a complex transition, especially for those who need to find stable housing, permanent employment, and quality healthcare. The greatest percentage of re-arrests occur within the first three months after release. Reentry Centers would help reduce recidivism rates by helping individuals and families apply for public benefits and find both housing and employment. The centers would also make referrals for continuation of care, including mental health and substance use treatment. A centralized office to help formerly incarcerated individuals access available resources is desperately needed to stop the cycle of incarceration.

Similar offices have been established in other large municipalities. For example, the Los Angeles Office of Diversion and Reentry, the D.C. Office on Returning Citizen Affairs, and Philadelphia's Office of Reintegration Services. Further, the Mass Bail Out in NYC in the fall established a Welcome Center, open 24-7 and situated in a trailer outside of Rikers Island. The mobile office connected recently released individuals to services in the community and provided metro cards and free cell phones for individuals released on bail. The proposed office could be run by MOCJ but function ideally through an interagency partnership with HPD, HRA, DHS, DOHMH, and others.

*Based on numbers from a similar program in Washington, D.C.

2. Universal Right to Counsel for Immigrants (Facing Deportation/Detention)

Proposed for FY20: \$16.5 million

To keep families together and communities strong, the City should be funding counsel for all immigrants facing deportation who cannot afford a lawyer. Funding would cover intake and full legal representation of the expanded detained docket at Varick Street which is currently being covered by the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project. This initiative would cover detained and non-detained people who are in removal proceedings.

3. Universal Childcare*

Quality child care is expensive, preventing many low-income women and people of color from accessing a vital service that could alleviate household costs, and preventing many women from entering, staying, and thriving in the city's workforce. The Administration should begin a pilot program for universal child-care and extend access to child-care and quality early childhood programming by expanding Universal 3-K, extending Universal Pre-K to children with disabilities or special needs, and expanding enriching afterschool and summer programs to fill in gaps for working parents.

*We will be working with advocates and central staff to finalize the dollar amount ask.

4. Bus Turnaround (Expanded Bus Lanes, Signal Priority, All-Door Boarding)

Our city needs a robust bus-based transit system that delivers fast and cost-effective services through an expansion of dedicated enforced bus lanes, signal priority, expanded service, all-door boarding, off-board fare collection, and frequent operations. Expanding bus service would ease transit for vulnerable New Yorkers (people of color, seniors, low-income communities) who live in transit deserts.

*We will be working with advocates and central staff to finalize the dollar amount ask.

5. Human Services Contracts & Salary Parity

Proposed for FY20: \$250 million for Human Service Contracts, plus additional funding for salary parity for certified teachers and salary increases for child care center directors

The Caucus is asking the City Council to include in their budget response a request for the Mayor to invest \$250 million dollars to fill the gap between provider's indirect costs and the contract reimbursement rates from the City. The new *Health and Human Services Cost Policies and Procedures Manual*, which was developed alongside Deputy Mayor Palacio, lays out standardized indirect costs for our sector. However, without increased funding to address the gaps this manual displays in our contracts, the fiscal crisis we are facing remains unaddressed. Based on numbers provided by the Office of Management and Budget, \$250 million should cover the costs to fully implement this manual.

In addition, the Caucus recommends that the Council advocate to right-size City contracts for community-based organizations (CBOs) with early childhood education programs in order to achieve pay parity for certified teachers and increase the salaries of directors and support staff. New York City offers early childhood education programs in both DOE public schools and through contracts with CBOs, which constitute 60% of all Pre-K for All programs. These CBOs

are the only providers of full-day, full-year early education programs, and provide an essential service to the working parents of NYC. While all teachers are required to have comparable degrees and credentials, early childhood educators at CBOs earn thousands of dollars less each year, with the gap worsening over the course of their careers. Community-based programs are rapidly losing teachers to the DOE. Because the majority of non-DOE early childhood educators are women of color, these pay disparities contribute to racial disparities citywide. The Mayor needs to right-size these contracts immediately and ensure equitable pay for all teachers, staff and directors in CBO's and fulfill his dream of a being the fairest big city in the nation.

Council Initiative Submissions (FINAL):

1. Expand Food Access through Council Food Initiatives

Proposed for FY20: \$1.8M+ for Food Initiatives (\$9.18M total), \$80K+ for Senior Centers, Programs, and Enhancements (\$2.18 M total)

As our City continues to struggle with putting food on the table for every New Yorker, the Caucus calls for increased funding for Food Access. An expansion would enhance existing Council Food Initiatives with additional capacity to bring food security to all New Yorkers.

Access to Healthy Food and Nutritional Education (\$250K+): In FY19, the City Council funded \$1,055,000 to this initiative. An expansion of \$250,000 to increase GrowNYC's Greenmarkets in areas that are limited in the number of green grocers. The partnership of GrowNYC and High Schools (Youthmarkets) offers career training and nutrition education while serving those utilizing SNAP benefits to increase their intake of fresh vegetables and fruits.

Food Access and Benefits (\$250K+): In FY19, the City Council provided \$725,000 to supports technical assistance for tax returns, SNAP benefits application, enrollment and recertification and emergency food assistance pantries. An addition \$250,000 would aid income support and SNAP services for low-income New Yorkers.

Food Pantries (\$1.3M+): In FY19, the budget was \$4,600,000 – we hope to see an increase for FY20. A \$300,000 increase would aid in the expansion of School Campus Pantries in elementary to high schools throughout the City. An additional \$1,000,000 to borough wide pantries to reduce the Meal Gap among our communities.

Halal and Kosher School Lunch Pilot: In FY19, the Council funded \$1 million to a pilot program to provide halal and kosher lunches in schools. The Council should increase this funding to reach more schools.

Senior Center Meals (\$80K+): This initiative is under the Senior Services portion of the Council's Schedule C budget, named 'Senior Centers, Programs, and Enhancements' in FY19,

and allocated \$2.104 million. A total of \$2.18 million would aid in full reimbursement to Senior Centers for on site meals.

2. Alternatives to Incarceration

Proposed for FY20: \$9.307 million

As the City deepens its commitment to closing Rikers, the Council should increase ATI funding to provide community benefits, provide addiction or mental health treatment, and rehabilitate offenders. With added support, the member organizations will be able to deploy greater resources to diversion programs, jail-based pre-release/transitional services, employment/job training, and housing support. Services provided will include: Education, Employment, Family, Housing, Legal, Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Technical Assistance to policymakers. They will also include programs aimed specifically at women and youth. Member organizations have decades worth of collective experience across neighborhoods in New York's City, reaching the most underserved communities.

The two-year recidivism rate for graduates of New York City's ATI/Reentry Coalition programs is less than 20%, far lower than the 42% recidivism rate for people who did not participate in these programs, demonstrating that the Coalition, through its programs, enables the City to reduce crime and break the cycle of incarceration, while saving tax dollars and strengthening communities. The City has taken major steps to improve its criminal justice system, and increasing funding towards these efforts will allow the City to continue its commitment to criminal justice reform.

3. Crisis Management System*

The Crisis Management System (CMS) programs funded take a public health approach to violence prevention that understands violence as a learned behavior that can be prevented using disease control methods. CMS uses an emergency management model which supports programs intended to prevent gun violence and restores damage done to communities by gun violence and funds programs that respond to gun violence. These neighborhood networks offer legal services, hospital response programs, youth employment opportunities, school based conflict mediation, community therapeutic services, job training programs and evaluation work.

The Caucus calls for additional support of these best practices through the identification and growth of this program. Because of the outstanding success of the CMS and the reduction in the violent crime categories these past several years, the Caucus supports increasing funding to expand anti-gun violence initiatives and CMS to high need neighborhoods. The Caucus advocates for the allocation of additional funding to CMS programming to continue its progress in violence reduction.

*We will be working with advocates and central staff to finalize the dollar amount ask.

4. Stabilizing NYC

Proposed for FY20: \$2.5 million

Funding will support a coalition of sixteen grassroots neighborhood-based organizations, a citywide legal service provider and a citywide housing advocacy organization who have come together to combat tenant harassment and preserve affordable housing. This project combines legal, advocacy and organizing resources into a citywide network to help tenants take their predatory equity landlords to task for patchwork repairs, bogus eviction cases, and affirmative harassment.

5. City's First Readers

Proposed for FY20: \$6 million

City's First Readers (CFR) is a collaboration of 10 nonprofit organizations fostering the literacy development of NYC children, ages 0-5. The initiative provides programs and services to families, early childcare providers, and educators to ensure children enter school ready to read and achieve educational success. CFR's coalition is comprised of local direct providers and institutions leading the fight citywide for early literacy, including Literacy INC (LINC), The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, JCCA, Jumpstart, Parent-Child Home Program, Reach Out and Read, Video Interaction Project, the Brooklyn Public Library, United Way, Queens Library, and New York Public Library.

Early literacy is a sound social investment. Children, especially those living in poverty or in homes where English is not dominate, face extra challenges in acquiring literacy. Third grade is a benchmark: children must reach proficiency in order to transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Nearly two out of three NYC third graders living in poverty do not read at grade level, putting them at great risk for falling further and further behind. The key is prevention.

Enhanced funding will support:

- Increased City's First Readers programming
- Expanded translation services
- Building a citywide public awareness campaign to connect families and caregivers
- to programs and services to support school readiness
- Strengthened evaluation and impact assessment
- Development of a City's First Readers app
- Collaboration with the Department of Homeless Services

6. Combating Opioids

Proposed for FY20: \$2.5 million

In the Fiscal 2019 Adopted Budget, the Council invested \$2 million in combating the opioid epidemic, which claimed 1,374 lives in New York City In 2016. The initiative supports both overdose prevention and treatment, providing drug treatment programs as well as an education campaign about the harms of opioids. The Caucus supports a \$500,000 increase to this initiative.

7. Cultural After School Adventure (CASA)

Proposed for FY20: \$16.3 million

The Cultural After School Adventures (CASA) programs provide an array of high-quality arts and cultural experiences to youth enrolled in after-school activities. The Caucus supports funding for these arts enrichment programs offered to students after-school.

8. Community Land Trusts

Proposed for FY20: \$850,000

The funding would be split based on group need (some will need to hire a full time staffer, some will need materials/organizing, etc) and go toward admin support for organizing and creating Community Land Trusts in 15 identified areas where they have already started capacity building.

9. Alternatives to Placement for Girls in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems

Proposed for FY20: \$300,000

The Caucus supports an ask by STEPS to End Family Violence and Girls for Gender Equity for a total of \$300,000 (\$150,000 per organization) as part of the New York City Council's Alternatives to Incarceration Discretionary Funding Initiative, to support their work to deliver services to girls in the juvenile justice system and/or otherwise defined as "at risk" by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). This project will launch on July 1, 2019 as a three year demonstration project, and is being supported, monitored, and evaluated by the Vera Institute of Justice and is the result of their many years of work to end the incarceration of girls in New York City through the multi-agency New York City Task Force to End Girls' Incarceration. The Task Force includes top leadership from ACS, DOP, Law Department, NYPD, DOE, DOHMH and more.

10. Language Interpreter Bank

Proposed for FY20: \$2 million

Language access is critical for New York City's diverse communities. Three out of every five New Yorkers are immigrants or children of immigrants, and nearly one in four New Yorkers have limited English proficiency. The Caucus supports funding that would create a pilot worker-cooperative program in the form of a community interpreter bank that provides language translation services that can be utilized by community-based organizations and City offices to provide language access services to their constituents.

Updated 4-1-19

Updated 4-5-19: Salary Parity